

**FIDUCIAL TECHNIQUE FOR ESTIMATING AND  
USING DEGRADATION LEVELS IN A PROCESS PLANT**

**ABSTRACT**

5       A process plant uses an asset utilization expert to collect data or information  
pertaining to the assets of the process plant from various sources or functional areas of  
the plant including, for example, the process control functional areas, the maintenance  
functional areas and the business systems functional areas. Some of this data, such as  
data indicative of one or more process parameters associated with a process entity like  
a furnace, may be used to estimate a degradation level, such as a coking level, of the  
10   process entity at a first time. The estimated level of the degradation of the process  
entity at the first time may then be compared to a predetermined desired level of  
degradation of the process entity at the first time and the operation of the process  
entity may be altered based on the comparison to drive the estimated amount of  
degradation of the process entity at a second time to be approximately equal to a  
15   predetermined desired level of degradation at the second time.